

# Catchment Group Story

Tairāwhiti/Gisborne | APRIL 2025



The Waipaoa Catchment has a number of groups working on restoring various awa in the catchment. 'Wai Connection – Tatai Ki Te Wai' Tairāwhiti have been working alongside the following projects:

- » **Rongowhakaata Taiao Kaimahi & Ngā Huru Tikotikoiere:** working together on fish surveys and water quality monitoring on Te Arai River, Pākōwhai Stream, Whatatuna Stream, and Karaua Stream.
- » **Maungarongo o Te Kooti Rikirangi Restoration Project:** A project to restore the abandoned oxbow of the Waipaoa River.
- » **Ngāi Tāwhiri Hapū:** Waikanae Stream Restoration.
- » **Makaraka School:** Taruheru River Restoration & Whitebait Connection Education including planting around the upper catchment.
- » **Ngatapa School:** Wetland Restoration.





**PHOTO CAPTIONS – Front page:** 1. Maungarongo Wetland wānanga with Dr Rebecca Eivers. **Page left:** 2. Amy Hardy with high school students carrying out their NCEA study at Maungarongo Wetland. 3. Īnanga at the base of a raised culvert in Foxley Road Stream. 4. Amy Hardy, teaching clarity tube readings to Ngatapa School students. 5. Kirsty Gaddum, NISP Coordinator, teaching Ngatapa School students about the importance of wetland ecosystems. 6. Kirsty Gaddum constructing an artificial spawning habitat for Īnanga at Foxley Road Stream. **Back page:** 7. Matt Brady (DOC), demonstrating the lamprey pheromone detection filter. 8. Waikanae Stream weed eradication education with Matt Brady, 'Wai Connection', Gisborne District Council, Ngāi Tāwhiri, and Rongowhakaata Iwi Trust.

# Connecting Community Groups & Restoration

'Wai Connection' have worked with various community and school groups within the Waipaoa Catchment on a number of exciting projects since the 'Wai Connection' team started in June 2024.



## Saltwater Wedge Mapping & Īnanga Spawning Habitat



Saltwater wedge mapping has been a major part of support to identify Īnanga spawning habitat. 'Wai Connection' National Īnanga Spawning Programme (NĪSP) Coordinator, Kirsty Gaddum, has been working closely with Ngā Huru Tikotikoiere – Rongowhakaata Taiao Kaimahi on Te Arai, Pākōwhai, Te Kōwhai, Whatatuna, and Karaua Awa to investigate the extent of the area where seawater and freshwater meet, and where native Īnanga spawn during spring high tides. This mapping identifies whether the riparian margins are suitable for adult Īnanga to lay their eggs, and whether these areas would benefit from riparian plantings or temporary artificial spawning habitat. Other work has involved identifying fish barriers (such as raised culverts), and working with Gisborne District Council (GDC) and Downer Group to remediate them.

Kirsty has also been working with Ngāi Tāwhiri Hapū to investigate the Waikanae Stream saltwater wedge running past Gisborne Airport. In addition to these surveys, Kirsty invited Department of Conservation (DOC) Freshwater fish expert Matt Brady to Tairāwhiti to educate catchment groups about various freshwater fish species, and their habitat requirements, as well as conducting electrofishing surveys and fish identification. More recently, Matt returned to Tairāwhiti to deploy pheromone filters to detect the presence of lamprey, and advise on weed eradication.



## Educational Outreach & Training Programs

Amy Hardy, 'Wai Connection' Catchment Coordinator, has been working with groups in the catchment over the last ten years on SHMAK training:

- » community freshwater workshops
- » delivering Biology NCEA achievement standards
- » completing fish surveys
- » spawning habitat assessments
- » Whitebait Connection (WBC) water monitoring assessments on habitats further upstream.

The schools involved:

- » Gisborne Boys' High School
- » Champion College
- » Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Ngā Uri A Maui
- » Manutuke School
- » Turanga Tangata Rite.

The Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust (MTSCT) Whitebait Connection (WBC) education programme alongside this work, teaching about Īnanga, their life cycle, identifying spawning zones and habitats, and how we can protect this precious tāonga.

Makaraka School, Gisborne Homeschoolers, Muriwai School and Ngatapa School have experienced this hands-on learning, followed by planting days and creating artificial spawning habitats.

In addition, Hana Hardy and Joe Palmer, 'Wai Connection' Catchment Coordinators, delivered the Experiencing Marine Reserves (EMR) programme alongside Amy at Te Tapuwae o Rongokako Marine Reserve throughout the summer season, receiving awesome feedback!



## Wetland Conservation & Research

In November 2024, Dr Rebecca Eivers, Wetland Ecologist at Wai Kōkopu Consulting was contracted to run a valuable wetlands Wānanga, organised by 'Wai Connection' Catchment Coordinator, Anne-Marie Vigeant. It included field visits by key stakeholders to the Maungarongo Wetland, (an abandoned oxbow of the Waipaoa River), now conserved under the Maungarongo o Te Kooti Rikirangi Restoration Project.

The oxbow covers 44 ha and is a natural habitat for native flora and fauna. Dr Eivers provided practical recommendations on enabling fish passage, maintaining good wetland volume, gradually managing weed control, and native planting.

The Year 11 and 12 NCEA Biology achievement standards that Amy Hardy has delivered within this catchment, used this wetland as their learning environment. Students from Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Ngā Uri A Maui and Turanga Tangata Rite compared two sites to identify different habitats, and completed invertebrate and fish surveys to meet their NCEA requirements.

## Next Steps



Moving forward, the ongoing work in the catchment will continue to focus on both education and proactive mahi, with an emphasis on strengthening relationships with the amazing community groups within the catchment by:

- » expanding īnanga habitat mapping
- » fish barrier remediation
- » ongoing educational outreach
- » collaboration with experts
- » monitoring and adaptive management.



To learn more about how 'Wai Connection – Tatai Ki Te Wai' is supporting the community groups of the Waipaoa catchment, please contact:

**KIRSTY GADDUM** | Mountains to Sea  
'Wai Connection' Catchment Coordinator  
[kirsty@mountainstosea.org.nz](mailto:kirsty@mountainstosea.org.nz)

**SARAH BOYLE** | Mountains to Sea  
'Wai Connection' Catchment Coordinator  
[sarah.b@mountainstosea.org.nz](mailto:sarah.b@mountainstosea.org.nz)  
[www.mountainstosea.org.nz](http://www.mountainstosea.org.nz)

